

Development Alternatives' Participation in India Rural Colloquy 2023: Fostering Equitable Rural Transformation



Shrashtant Patara, CEO, DA (extreme left) at the event with other dignitaries

New Delhi, August 30, 2023—The India Rural Colloquy 2023, organised by Transform Rural India, brought together thought leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders from August 1 to 8, 2023, at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi. This event aimed to ignite discussions, inspire action, and co-create strategies for stronger rural communities, emphasising a multi-disciplinary approach to amplify government policies and promote equity in villages.

One notable session, held on August 1, was titled "Change the Picture: Where You're Born = What You Can Be," moderated by Shrashtant Patara, CEO of Development Alternatives. The session explored how where someone is born can affect their opportunities and ambitions. It highlighted the importance of local solutions rather than imposing top-down approaches. Patara emphasised the role of people's institutions, including women's institutions, in bridging gaps with support from government and civil society. The discussion underscored the urgency of addressing challenges for more equity and upward mobility.

Patara eloquently stated, "How we discover opportunities and local solutions can be millions, but they need to be discovered locally and not prescribed from the top down".

Another significant session, "Habitat for India @2047," occurred on August 7. The focus was on understanding the evolving rural-urban transition in India. Zeenat Niazi, Senior Vice President of Development Alternatives, stood out as a panellist. She highlighted the challenges arising in transformed rural areas that are adopting urban patterns due to development waves. The session delved into topics like urban planning, civic amenities, and infrastructure.



A beautiful thank you note was received by Ms Zeenat Niazi for gracing the event with her presence

Niazi emphasised the need to strengthen systems to harness the potential of initiatives driving the rural-urban transition. The discussions revolved around social, cultural, and economic dimensions of transformation. The experts suggested incorporating these insights into upcoming guidelines. Empowering local governing bodies to manage transformative projects was also a key point of discussion.

The session also addressed issues of equity and land governance, proposing strategies to tackle these challenges effectively. The panellists proposed innovative approaches to ensure a just quality of life for everyone.

The India Rural Colloquy showcased a meaningful endeavour, paving the way for a more equitable and sustainable future for rural and India.